DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 957 CE 080 228

AUTHOR Maxted, Peter
TITLE Realising Potential: Helping Homeless and Disenchanted Young People Back into Learning.
INSTITUTION Foyer Foundation, London (England).; Campaign for Learning, London (England).
SPONS AGENCY Department for Education and Employment, London (England).; Lifelong Learning Foundation, Manchester (England).
ISBN ISBN-1-903107-01-6
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 43p.; Supported by Lincoln Financial Group.
PUB TYPE Opinion Papers (120)
EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Age Differences; Attitudes; Case Studies; Developed Nations; *Dropouts; Foreign Countries; *Homeless People; *Housing; *Learning; Potential Dropouts; *Reentry Students; Residential Programs; Sex Differences; Special Needs Students; *Student Motivation

ABSTRACT

This guide shows how "Foyers" (safe residences for working/learning youth) and other organizations provide routes back into learning for young people. Chapter 1, "Young People and the Current Learning Agenda," provides a summary of encouraging developments from government, ushering in new learning opportunities for young people. Chapter 2, "Turning Young People Back on to Learning," presents findings from interviews and group discussions to test for differences in attitude between genders and younger people and young adults. These findings show how learning fits into these groups' worlds and focus on their principal interests and concerns; attitudes to learning; motivations to learn; barriers to learning; overcoming barriers; and learning role models. Chapter 3, "The Foyer Movement," describes the Foyer Federation and how Foyers work. Chapter 4, "Learning from Experience," draws seven case studies from selected Foyers and seven from other organizations working with disenchanted young people. These keys to tackling problems are discussed: time and care, learner involvement, overcoming negative experiences, making it fun, motivation, support and staff, positive learning experiences, holistic approach, paying the bills, managing success, and making partnerships work. Case studies of 12 individuals are included, and a brief resume of each project is found at the end of the chapter. Chapter 5, "Joined-Up Learning," lists key learning points and recommends action to address the issue. (YLB)

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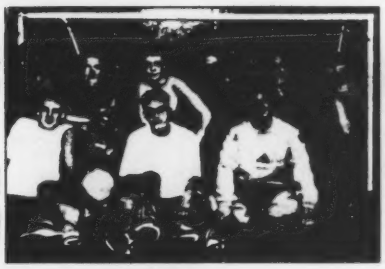

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Helping homeless and disenchanted young people back into learning

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REALISING POTENTIAL

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Peter Maxted

CAMPAIGN FOR **LEARNING**/
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE author and the Campaign for Learning would like to thank the following individuals and organisations who made this book possible: The Lifelong Learning Foundation and the DfEE for funding the Campaign for Learning research; Hauck Research for the information in Chapter 2; the Foyer Federation and the individual foyers listed on pages 30–32 for case studies and comments; Sir Michael Bichard for chairing an initial research seminar on 1st December 1998; the Diageo Foundation for hosting it and all those experts, practitioners and young people who attended and gave their advice. Particular thanks go to Jane Mackenzie, Foyer Manager at Wigan Coops/Ravenhead St Helens and Chester Foyers, and John Williams, Foyer Manager at Stoke on Trent YMCA Foyer, for their presentations at the seminar.
Chapter 1 of this guide was written by Bill Lucas and Chapter 2 by Toby Greany of the Campaign for Learning.

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First published 1999 by the Campaign for Learning
Campaign for Learning, 19 Buckingham Street, London WC2N 6EF

Produced for the Campaign for Learning by Southgate Publishers Ltd, 15 Barnfield Avenue, Exmouth, Devon EX8 2QE

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Printed and bound in Great Britain by Short Run Press Ltd, Exeter, Devon.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 1-903107-01-6

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Routes into learning

THERE is currently much talk of an exciting new Learning Age. It will be a world in which learning provides routes to personal, social and economic well-being for everyone.

It is easy to become excited about a society peopled by individuals eager to learn throughout their lives. Such pictures come easily to one's mind. But they contrast strongly with the reality many of us currently experience. Outside our schools, on the streets, in low paid jobs, in sheltered accommodation, on some estates and in poor housing, the picture looks rather different. This is especially true for some members of one important group – young people. For too many of this group, instead of excitement and engagement there is disillusion, low self-esteem and little motivation to work or learn.

"There is a generation of young people who are losing out by not being in education and training – their loss is also our loss."
David Blunkett

Aims of the guide

It was to try and understand a little more about the routes back into learning which disenchanted young people might be helped to take that the Campaign for Learning joined forces with the Foyer Federation. This guide is the result of our collaboration. It is aimed at all those individuals and organisations that are concerned about the learning of young people, especially those of them who are the least fortunate. It has been produced after a year's research into how some organisations, foyers and other specialist groups, are managing to provide routes back into learning for young people. It combines a timely overview of current policy developments for the learning of disenchanted young people, some new research by the Campaign for Learning into young people's attitudes, analysis of what currently works on the ground and interviews with a selection of young people, many of whom have experienced one of the most alienating experiences of any civilised society – homelessness.

The chapters

During the past months there have been many encouraging developments from government, ushering in new learning opportunities for young people. These are summarised by Bill Lucas in Chapter 1.

To help all those working with young people to understand what is most likely to turn them back on to learning, we commissioned new qualitative research from Hauck Research International. These findings are outlined by Toby Greany in Chapter 2.

The Foyer Federation has itself been looking at ways of understanding more about different routes into learning and work for different types of foyer users. An outline of how foyers work and data from them is referred to in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 4 we have drawn together new evidence from 14 organisations working with the most disenchanted of young people. This is brought alive through 12 case study interviews with young people themselves whose stories we have told, and from whom we have learned.

Finally, we have summarised useful points from this and other studies into young people's learning and listed a number of organisations working in the field to whom it may be useful to refer.

In all, we hope this guide offers some useful pointers to what works on the ground and builds on the excellent work of many pioneering organisations in a very fast moving area which is of concern to us all.

Young people and the current learning agenda

OVER the past decade, there has been a steady rise in the number of young people who are staying on in full-time education and, therefore, who are likely to be involved in learning. At the same time there has been a fall in the number of those who move from school straight into full-time work – down to 7% in 1996. This is to be welcomed. But it only tells part of the story.

For, during the same last ten years, there have been some other, more distressing, trends. Today some 161,000 young people aged between 16 and 18 are not involved in learning of any kind. That's 1 in 11 – or 9% – of each 'year group'. The Foyer Federation estimates that there are between 20,000 and 30,000 homeless 16–17-year-olds in England. For the purposes of this guide, we are defining young people as those between the age of 16 and 24, a nine-year rite of passage into adulthood.

"Today some 161,000 young people aged between 16 and 18 are not involved in learning of any kind."

Homelessness is often an extreme expression of disenchantment. We know that there are many other indicators, from youth offences and drug abuse data to school exclusions and teenage pregnancies. While it is notoriously difficult to calculate the number of homeless people at any one time and it is always going to be difficult to determine where disenchantment ends and satisfaction begins, it is clear that we currently have a sizeable group of young people, perhaps in the hundreds of thousands, who are not realising their potential.

In the last two years there has been much activity. The New Deal and New Start programmes, along with a range of innovative, often local, voluntary sector projects, have begun to offer new opportunities to those young people in most need. The existence of the Social Exclusion Unit is a potent reminder of the need to create a more socially inclusive world. And in its work to date, the Unit has also begun to exemplify in practice the joined-up approaches to complex issues which this government has publicly adopted as its watchword.

In 1998 the Government published *The Learning Age*. It laid out a vision of a brave new world of learning for all, in a place and at a time which suits them. At its centre are two big ideas, the University for Industry (UfI) and Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs). Both, when implemented, will undoubtedly change the landscape of learning. The UfI will make learning available and accessible where now it is not. ILAs will change the culture of payment for learning, giving greater power to the individual.

But neither of these initiatives will do much for disenchanted young people in the short-term. For *The Learning Age* deals with the majority of the population, those who are housed, in work and not at the margins. The Moser report has highlighted graphically the problems of very low levels of numeracy and literacy which afflict a proportion of our society, and which might help us to understand the family backgrounds of many of the young people who are the subject of this guide.

Recently the Government has announced a number of major developments. Most of these are contained in two documents, *Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post-16 learning*, and *Bridging the Gap: new opportunities for 16–18 year olds in education, employment or training*. The first of these comes from the Department for Education and Employment and the second from the Social Exclusion Unit. They describe new organisations, new strategic approaches and new pilot projects and initiatives.

Learning to Succeed proposes a new system of planning and funding post-16 education and training. It will put new emphasis on a national strategy and will change the emphasis of all post-16 education and training to promote partnership rather than competition. It will see the replacement of TECs with a new national Learning and Skills Council, and fifty local ones, in April 2001. The national Council will be advised by two Committees, one of which will have direct responsibility for young people. This Committee will suggest action and strategies to promote the

learning of young people. Also announced is a new strategy called 'Connexions'. Central to the new thinking is the importance of effective help, support and guidance for young learners, and a Learning Gateway for 16- and 17-year-olds who need extra guidance and support is being introduced from the end of 1999. The new arrangements being created for young people are based on the concept of personal advisers.

In *Bridging the Gap* the Connexions strategy is outlined in more detail and other new initiatives are announced. There are four main strands:

- Having a clear set of outcomes for all young people to aim at by age 19, a concept referred to with obvious American influences, as 'graduation';
- Having a variety of pathways to graduation;
- Overcoming practical barriers by developing Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) and Youth Cards to help with transport, and
- Reorganising the currently fragmented support systems to create a new unified service, the Committee of the new Learning and Skills Council, to steer young people through the system.

Connexions, as its name suggests, seeks to improve outreach and personal support. As well as the new Learning Cards, the New Start initiative will be extended to sixty pilot projects, which will seek to identify new ways of tackling disaffection. The Careers Service will be asked to focus on those, such as the most disaffected, who are in most need. And, in parallel, there will be measures to combat truancy and exclusion from school. There are new ideas, too, in the area of curriculum and qualifications. Education Action Zones will particularly test out approaches to disaffection. There is likely to be greater flexibility in the 14–16 curriculum under the National Curriculum review, National Traineeships will be expanded and a new basic skills qualification for 16–17-year-olds is being developed.

From late 1999 onwards, there will be better individual support through the new Learning Gateway network of personal advisers and more financial support through the EMAs to encourage learning. In 2000, there will also be a range of small-scale pilot projects, along EMA lines, to tease out the additional support that will be needed by young people who are homeless.

And finally, with the right to time for study or training legislation in force from September 1999, it will be easier for young people to combine work with learning.

The publication is also full of useful practical advice and holistic thinking. It reminds us of the range of agencies dealing with disaffected young people. The list is a long one, including: Education Welfare, Educational Psychology Service, Careers companies, TECs, Employment Service, Benefits Agency, Housing Benefits Departments, Social Landlords, Youth Offending Teams, Health Services, Drug Action Teams, Social Services, the Prison and Probation Services and a host of local and voluntary sector projects and agencies.

Of particular relevance to this guide are the principles for providing effective education and training for disadvantaged young people. These include:

- Effective pre-vocational support to build basic and key skills and help with personal problems.
- Tailoring schemes to local and individual needs.
- Creating more flexible funding schemes.
- Building rapport between tutors/trainers and the young people.
- Creating an integrated package of support, including good quality work placements with clear learning objectives and run by sympathetic employers.

Bridging the Gap is perhaps best summed up by this quotation from the Prime Minister who introduces the document; "The best defence against social exclusion is to have a good job, with the right training and experience." There is no doubt that from 2000 onwards, all those working to help disenchanted young people into learning will be operating in a more learner-centred and friendly environment.

There are still many unresolved issues, though. While the graduation concept will provide something for some of those who currently gain no qualifications, it is likely to miss a hard core who will continue to find their failures reinforced by the system. More generally, there is much work to be done on qualifications. It remains to be seen whether there really will be sufficient flexibility at school for 14–16-year-olds to create a less academic

set of real options that recognise more than the current IQ-based subjects. Certainly, this was a key issue to the disenchanted young people interviewed by the Campaign for Learning in its recent research (see Chapter 2). Some barriers to learning, whether personal, cultural or structural, will undoubtedly remain too great for those young people whose appetite for learning is least strong.

There have been various excellent attempts at teasing out good practice in this area recently, since Crisis first published *Skills for Life*, its guide to help homeless people of all ages into resettlement and employment, in 1998. Of particular importance in terms of the practical advice it contains is *Only Connect: successful practice in educational work with disaffected young adults*, by Bryan Merton and Allen Parrott for NIACE. This book, while not particularly dealing with homeless young people, draws conclusions which resonate strongly with the experiences of those interviewed in Chapter 4.

It is interesting that in all of the publications discussed in this chapter there remains a confusion of vocabulary: the words learning, training and education are used almost interchangeably as if they meant the same thing. They do not! Learning, as the Campaign for Learning's 1998 MORI poll reminded us, and as the chart below shows, is associated most with discovering, enjoyment and achievement.

For each of these words or phrases say whether you associate it most with a) learning, b) training or c) education

	LEARNING %	TRAINING %	EDUCATION %	NOT STATED %
Achievement	37	27	34	2
Being taught	31	19	48	3
School	26	3	71	1
Qualifications	12	37	49	2
Gaining new skills	23	72	3	2
Hard work	36	41	18	4
Boring	24	18	31	27
Discovering	70	7	19	3
Enjoyment	62	21	11	6
Computers	30	47	19	4
Finding out more	67	8	21	4
Exchanging ideas	54	16	27	3
Studying	33	7	57	2
TV/Video	60	9	24	8
Personal growth	52	19	23	5

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Turning young people back on to learning

AS DESCRIBED in the last chapter, a number of recent reports have highlighted the fact that many young people are disenchanted with, and disengaged from, learning. The Campaign for Learning has made creating an appetite for learning among young people with few qualifications one of its key priorities and is working with the Foyer Federation and others to reach this target group. But, if we are to turn disenchanted young people back onto learning, then we have to know what 'makes them tick'.

Understanding how young people with few qualifications perceive learning, and the barriers that prevent them from getting on with it, is a crucial first step if we are to successfully rekindle the natural curiosity they were born with and support their return to learning. Qualitative research carried out on behalf of the Campaign, in June and July 1999, explored these questions with housed and homeless young people.

The research was with 16–24-year-olds in London and Manchester who had left school with a maximum of two formal qualifications. It took the form of in-depth interviews and small group discussions and deliberately tested for differences in attitude between genders and between younger people (16–18-year-olds) and young adults (19–24-year-olds). The findings, drawn from wide ranging discussions, provide a useful snapshot of how learning fits into these groups' worlds.

Warm and cold worlds

As might be expected, young people with homes inhabit a very different 'world' to the homeless. While a number of factors inevitably influence individual attitudes – including age, work experience, family background and region (northern respondents tended to have lower expectations of the future) – as a rule, housed respondents have lifestyles in which friends and socialising are paramount.

Their principal interests and concerns can be summarised as:

- Money (including work and social security benefits)
- Friends
- Family (a minority of the group lived at home)
- Television
- Social life
- The pub and
- The opposite sex.

As with all groups, the attitudes of their parents and family towards learning are highly influential. Interestingly, it is young people who are parents themselves whose lifestyle becomes more child-focussed and less dominated by the social scene. Only a minority of respondents voluntarily admitted to undertaking any learning activities, such as playing sport, going to the gym or watching the Discovery Channel.

While homeless young people are also very much rooted in the here and now, their concerns are inevitably more functional. The focus is on getting through each day and the future is consciously blocked out. While work is acknowledged as the first step in moving out of homelessness, for most it remains a distant possibility. More immediate concerns loom large, including finding shelter, obtaining money and food, avoiding arrest, dealing with the health problems caused by homelessness and, often, feeding alcohol or drug habits which offer physical and psychological ease.

However, as the Foyer case studies that follow demonstrate, learning is a far more achievable goal for those without drug or alcohol problems and staying in more secure accommodation. One 19-year-old girl respondent had been homeless since she was 16, but was waiting to find out the results of her 'A' Level studies in Morroccan, Business Studies and Sociology. The key barriers she faced were being accepted on a course, finding tutors who were understanding of her circumstances; (she had to leave lessons early in order to find somewhere to sleep for the night) and having an address for her results to be posted to by the LEA.

Attitudes to learning

For both housed and homeless young people 'learning' is inextricably and powerfully associated

with 'school' and 'education'. Individual memories of these ranged from the ambivalent to the highly negative, but general themes included the belief that learning at school was:

- Imposed – rather than undertaken through personal choice.
- Focussed on gaining qualifications.
- Boring – many subjects were seen as irrelevant.

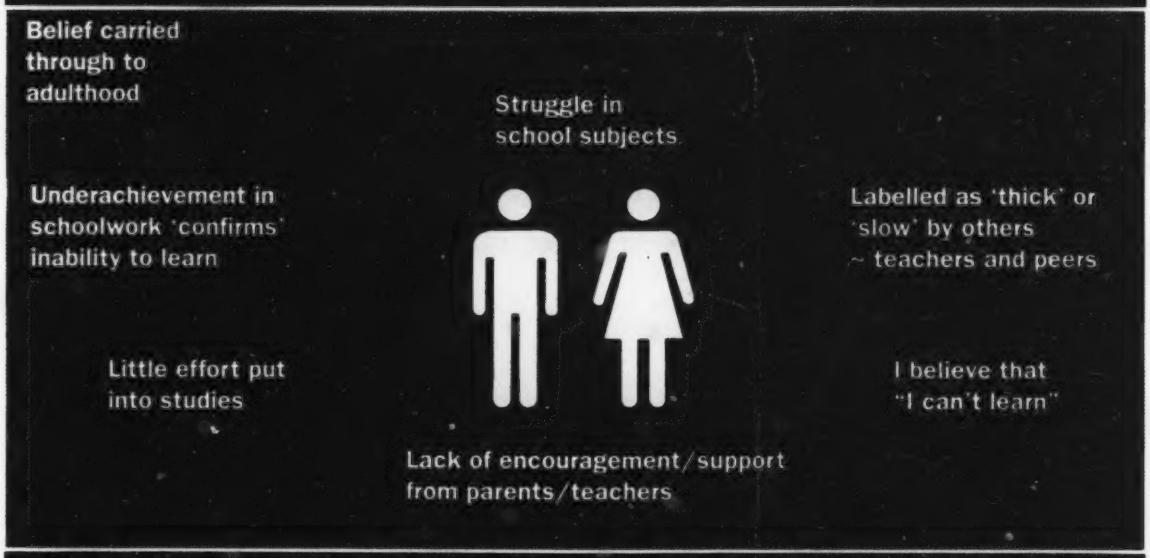
Although some young people recognised their alternative intelligences ("I'm not thick, I'm just not good at thinking"), all agreed that schools focus on the 'brainy' pupils and that theoretical subjects dominate. Other memories of school included the fact that there was:

- A lack of respect – either from teachers or more able children.
- A lack of encouragement – many felt they had been 'sidelined' by teachers into lower streams.
- Bullying.
- A lack of personal interest/involvement – many admitted to not 'being bothered' about school.
- Some (homeless) young people were already using alcohol and drugs.
- Considerable external peer pressure – personal life/social scene were seen as more interesting.

Negative views were particularly strong among the younger groups (16–18-year-olds), although a minority recognised that learning in a Further Education college might be more 'adult'. This view seems to be the exception and for most people negative experiences of learning at school lead to a lifelong self-fulfilling prophecy; having been labelled as 'thick' by teachers and peers, a belief that 'I can't learn' develops (unchallenged by parents). This leads to a lack of interest or effort in schoolwork and (with few qualifications or academic achievements to show) 'confirmation' for life of an inability to learn (see box below).

With no experiences of 'successful' learning to sustain them, many can see no direct benefits from it. This changes slightly for those in work, especially among the older group, where both on-the-job and formal learning opportunities can be seen to bring direct benefits in terms of jobs and money. Outside this sphere, however, spontaneously learning for personal development or satisfaction remains an alien concept except, sometimes, for those with children.

A self-fulfilling prophecy


Belief carried through to adulthood
Struggle in school subjects
Underachievement in schoolwork 'confirms' inability to learn
Labelled as 'thick' or 'slow' by others ~ teachers and peers
Little effort put into studies
I believe that "I can't learn"
Lack of encouragement/support from parents/teachers

This self perpetuating cycle of negativity can start at a very young age but influences perceptions of self through to adulthood

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Motivations to learn

Ultimately, learning clearly can and should benefit everyone in the widest possible number of ways. However, models such as Maslow's Hierachy of Needs, when applied to young people's attitudes to learning, highlight the most likely ways in which their initial interest and motivation might be sparked.

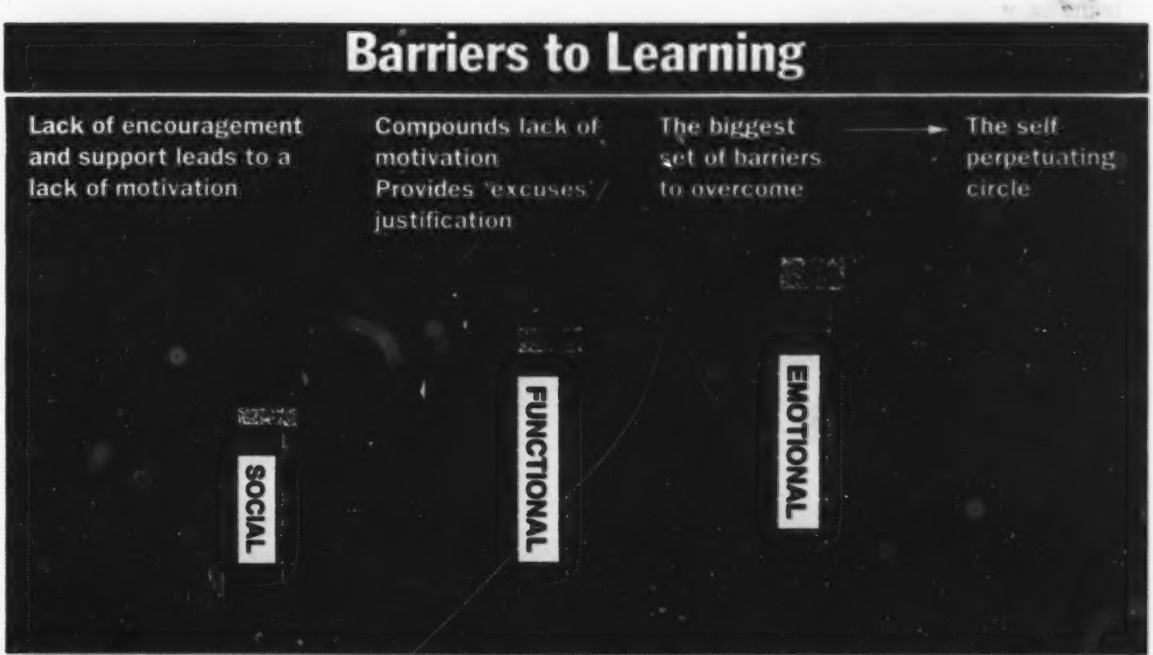
There are three levels at which motivation to learn can operate:

- Basic – for most young people learning is solely a means of self-preservation; to get or keep a job, to get money or to avoid appearing 'stupid' in front of others. Understandably, homeless people struggle particularly hard to move beyond this level.
- Developing – for some of the older ones and for mothers, learning begins to play a part in self-development; to achieve goals and ambitions or to build confidence and experience.
- Developed – for the few who had more positive experiences of learning at work, learning begins to be seen as a means of achieving self-recognition; helping them to feel good about themselves.

In creating an appetite for learning, promotional efforts clearly have to start from where people are at, while building the bridge to further development. For most, learning needs to be shown as a means of achieving direct benefits (especially jobs and wages) and clear staging posts or goals need to be set along the route. Beyond this, the possibilities for self-development can be prompted – whether for an enhanced role at work, to become a better parent or simply to be the most interesting person at the pub. Finally, once other motivations are embedded, learning can be offered as a means of truly getting the most out of life and yourself.

Barriers to learning

Nonetheless, though many of these can be seen as factors of motivation themselves, any strategy to ignite young people's appetite for learning must also take into account the barriers they will face in actually getting on with it. As might be expected, the barriers that confront homeless young people are greatly exacerbated, although they generally fall into the same categories as those for young housed people (see box below).


Barriers to Learning
Lack of encouragement and support leads to a lack of motivation
Compounds lack of motivation
Provides 'excuses' / justification
The biggest set of barriers to overcome
The self perpetuating circle
SOCIAL
FUNCTIONAL
EMOTIONAL

Homeless youths face the same barriers as housed youths. However, their barriers to learning are exacerbated by issues associated with their homelessness

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Social Barriers include:

- Family environments where learning is not valued. Even for the minority with families that encouraged learning, their parents lacked confidence and saw learning as the school's responsibility.
- Lack of organisations/environments which encourage, or even accept, homeless youths into a learning environment. Foyers and other centres were not mentioned spontaneously by any of the group.
- Awareness of peer perceptions of learning as 'uncool'.
- Threat of social embarrassment if they 'fail' to learn again. 'Failing' at school might have brought kudos, but 'failing' at voluntary learning would risk social exposure for being 'thick'.

For homeless people the daily struggle to survive is the primary functional barrier to learning.

Functional Barriers for all include the lack of:

- Money – the primary functional barrier for most, including the fear of loosing benefits.
- Time – including work and a reluctance to compromise social arrangements as well as family commitments for those with children.
- Transportation – the majority were dependent on public transport.
- Current levels of educational skills.

Emotional Barriers include:

- An intrinsic dislike of, or detachment from, learning.
- A belief that they are unable to learn, based on past experiences.
- The fear of looking a fool and general lack of self confidence.
- A lack of motivation; most see no emotional or functional benefit to learning.

Learning beyond School

SCHOOL	WORK	PERSONAL
✓	✓	✗
• Spontaneous reluctance to move perceptions of learning beyond the school environment	• Learning opportunities are identified in the workplace • On the job training much more positively received than 'learning'	• Few are able to accept a role for learning in terms of personal development/ satisfaction • Learning is not done out of personal choice • Some change in attitude for those with children
↓	↓	↓
LEARNING IS SCHOOL	**LEARNING FOR JOB (FOR MONEY)**	**LEARNING FOR CHILDREN**

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- A belief that learning will be hard or difficult rather than pleasurable.
- A self identity which does not include 'learning'.

Overcoming Barriers to Learning

In depth probing around these barriers, including an analysis of various examples of leaflets, posters, guides and role models used in the promotion of learning, suggested a number of steps that could be taken to overcome the barriers preventing young people from learning and sparking their motivation.

To challenge the social barriers that prevent young people learning, it needs to be positioned as aspirational and relevant to their lives. Care should be taken not to trivialise learning by dressing it up as the latest 'cool and trendy' craze. 'Common sense' and practical learning needs to be presented as having equal value to more academic theory-based learning. Learning environments are required which suit all skills and abilities and which foster achievement, not failure (see box on page 11).

Learning messages

A number of approaches to promoting the benefits of learning were assessed by the young people. These included the following promotional slogans.

'DISCOVER THE TALENTS WITHIN YOU'

This was seen as a positive invitation which the majority could respond to as it builds on the belief that everyone has something they're good at and is not restricted to theory-based learning.

'LEARN NOW FOR A BETTER FUTURE'

The clear reason to learn was appreciated with this slogan, where a 'better future' was interpreted as a better job with more money, which is highly relevant and motivational. However, it was rejected by some for its perceived dictatorial tone, while its implication that the future will not be as good without learning is resented.

'STRETCH YOUR BRAIN'

Learning is not yet about challenging the self or self-development for these groups, which also rejected the implication that 'you should...'

'BE THE BEST THROUGH LEARNING'

This was strongly rejected for its patronising tone. The groups did not accept that learning makes you a better person, although some acknowledged that learning helps you make the best of yourself.

Learning Role Models

The young people were highly motivated by the idea of using inspirational role models to communicate the benefits of learning. However, role models should be carefully selected to have relevance, credibility and popularity amongst this group. The profile of the ideal role model amongst housed youths would be someone who is:

- Famous
- Popular with both sexes
- Young
- Fashionable
- Approachable
- Aspirational
- Has succeeded despite few qualifications or a troubled background.

Big Breakfast TV presenter Johnny Vaughan was consistently identified as fitting this profile well. However, for homeless youths, community role models associated with their immediate environment, for example from within homeless organisations, are more inspirational and trusted.

Building motivation

Finally, once the groups had discussed a broader definition of learning they were asked what, in particular, they would like to learn about. Ideas included:

- Parenthood
- Computers
- Cooking
- Car mechanics
- Customer relations and air freight handling
- Plumbing
- Bricklaying
- Singing
- Carpentry
- Advertising and marketing.

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KEY LEARNING POINTS:

- **Lifestyle and social issues are the most powerful influences on whether a young person with few qualifications will continue with, or return to, learning.**
- **Homeless young people have survival issues which are far more important to them than learning.**
- **Most disenchanted young people have negative memories of school, and thus of learning.**
- **An ingrained feeling of having an inability to learn is often prevalent.**

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS:

- **Accessibility is a key to overcoming many functional barriers, in terms of location and provision of transport. There need to be low or no costs for the learning itself to the individual concerned.**
- **For homeless people, learning needs to be presented as a long-term route out of deprivation and homelessness, and thus a 'necessity'.**
- **A clear indication of the end-benefits, such as a chance to get off the streets, a long term solution to basic needs, enhanced earning potential etc, can help to convey a reason for beginning learning.**
- **Learning in adult contexts needs to be clearly disassociated from school.**
- **The language used in the promotion of learning needs to be finely tuned to appeal to young people.**
- **Finding appropriate role models to promote learning to young people is essential.**

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The Foyer movement

FOYERS were originally instituted in France to provide safe accommodation for young people working in the cities away from their parental home, taking up apprenticeships on the railways or work at urban post offices, for example.

In the UK the Young Men's/Women's Christian Associations offered a similar, though less official, accommodation service for many young people seeking clerical work in large cities, particularly London.

By the end of the 1980's, however, the quite different needs of many young people had become apparent. In France, some Foyers became hostels for homeless and unemployed young people as well as for those already in work or training. Foyers became mixed communities where homeless young people lived alongside the traditional user group – trainees and students. In the UK the Foyer movement has developed to provide secure accommodation for young people, allied to an individual 'action plan' detailing agreed education/training intentions, employment opportunities, life skills and social development goals.

"There are now 89 Foyers in the UK and each year an estimated 4,000 young peoople enter a Foyer."

Since 1992 the UK Foyer movement has provided this new type of hostel provision for homeless young people and those in housing need, focusing on helping individuals to achieve their 'transition to independence', with commitment to their individual action plans a condition of residence.

The movement's mission has appealed to a variety of funding agencies, local authorities, housing associations, charitable foundations and others.

Foyers can be an important resource enabling young people to escape social exclusion and become fully integrated members of society. There are now 89 Foyers in the UK and each year an estimated 4,000 young people enter a Foyer and up to 3,200 leave (the higher entrants figure reflecting the fact that new Foyers are being opened each year). This is a considerable number of young people to be housed by a movement that has been in existence for only seven years.

Important questions

What types of young people are using Foyers? What happens to them when they leave? What kind of accommodation do they find? Do they achieve stable employment and, if so, what type? What social/family networks are being established or re-established while young people are living in the Foyer? Has their self-confidence improved?

The importance of these questions has prompted individual Foyers to put learning at the forefront of their activities. The case studies, referred to in Chapter 4, all focus on different learning activities and most Foyers now have a team of professionals who help young people to access learning opportunities.

The questions are particularly important given the changes in the movement's client group. One fifth of all young people currently entering Foyers are aged 16–17, and this group stays for longer than other residents. This compares with the previous 'typical' resident who was 18-plus and entering 'second-stage accommodation'. This suggests that some Foyers are now becoming a housing resource for the 'first time homeless', helping them achieve their transition to independence without experiencing some of the worst aspects of homelessness and/or joblessness.

A separate question is raised by the education profile of some residents. Are Foyers 'aspirational' projects for young people whose main or only problem is lack of accommodation, or are they, like many other hostels, also working as 'special needs projects' with a range of young people with different needs?

The Foyer Federation has noted that some of the high 'outputs' achieved by the first Foyers are not being achieved by all. Is this related to changes in the client profile? Do 16- and 17-year-olds stay in Foyers longer because they have further to travel to independence, or is it because of age limits on move-on accommodation? Do some stay only a short period of time because they become reconciled with their parents? What does the 'action plan' of the youngest entrants achieve for them compared with older residents? Are

there differences between clients of different backgrounds, gender or ethnicity?

Data has been collected recently on the background of young people who enter Foyers, the range of services required to complete their 'action plan', the profile of those who successfully complete and their destination on leaving the Foyer.

From the information gathered, it is possible to speculate that there are four types of young people being housed by Foyer projects.

ROOFLESS – 41%
Young people who are getting on at school but found themselves with a problem of accommodation. Aspirational groups of young people whose chief problem is housing.

VULNERABLE – 24%
Young people who are dealing with a range of problems, many of which were outside their control – a history of care, a history of disability or mental ill health. Young people who are vulnerable due to special needs or a history of care.

LOW ACHIEVERS – 21%
Young people who are not in a special needs category but who failed at school or found that school failed them. Young people whose abilities are undeveloped and whose aspirations may be below, or above, their capacities.

BEHAVIOURALLY CHALLENGED – 14%
Young people who have developed a range of behaviour problems, including drug and alcohol misuse and offending. Young people who need to change behaviour as well as acquiring work skills.

Obviously these categories are not exclusive: young people who are vulnerable due to other circumstances may also be alcohol and/or drugs misusers; young people with no qualifications may in other respects have clear aspirations.

Most young people have higher employment aspirations than their current qualifications would allow them to achieve. The main help therefore that they seek from the Foyer is in obtaining education leading to qualifications, dealing with problems, and ultimately in finding employment and accommodation.

Gender differences

The majority of 16- and 17-year-olds accommodated by Foyers are female. It appears that their action plans are easier to establish and implement, being largely concerned with continuing education and providing a secure environment in which they can develop. It is notable that young women are more likely to gain qualifications than young men, while Foyers are more likely to search for suitable job training for young men. This different orientation towards young women and young men may lead to different outcomes in the long run.

EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHILE LIVING AT A FOYER

Course taken:	%
IT courses	18
Living skills	17
Pre-vocational/access skills	9
NVQs/RSA/NNEB	20
BTEC/HNC/A levels	8
None	29
Other/missing	10
Qualifications achieved:	
Internal certification	15
External certification	15
None	70
Other	9

OTHER ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHILE AT THE FOYER

Achievement	%
Went to college/back to college	11
Gained employment	27
Increased independence	24
Increased social/life skills	29
Increased communication skills	10

EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY ON LEAVING

Employment	%
Full-time work	24
Part-time work	11
Government training	23
F/T-P/T student	17
Long-term sick	9
Other/missing	17

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Learning from experience

TO ILLUSTRATE the range of current activities, 14 different projects have been studied in some detail for this guide. Seven case studies are drawn from selected Foyers and seven from other organisations. A number of other projects provided us with supplementary information. In addition we listened to the comments of 12 individuals, young people participating in the various projects, all of whom are involved in learning.

The organisations studied were:

- Edmonds Court Foyer (Birmingham)
- Wrexham Foyer
- Home and Dry (Scarborough Foyer)
- Stoke-on-Trent YMCA Foyer
- Yeovil Trinity Foyer
- Manchester Foyer
- Gateway Foyer (London)
- Double Take (Warwickshire)
- Digital Learning Ring (London)
- The Magazine Project (Yorkshire)
- New Start (Devon & Cornwall)
- Training for Life (National)
- Youth at Risk (Knowsley)
- The Wheels Community Project (Hertfordshire).

A brief résumé of each of these projects is included at the end of this chapter. In addition to the projects above, we also obtained useful information from The Acorn Project (Nottingham), Learning Gateway (Leicester), Training Taster (Tyneside), Runshaw Business Centre 'Train the Trainer' and New Start (Blackburn).

The wider picture

At the 'macro' or political level, it is clear that the issue of learning for disaffected young people is gaining an ever-higher profile. A number of Government initiatives such as the New Deal and New Start are both a recognition of the problems and a determination to address them. Equally, the recent report from the Social Exclusion Unit was welcomed by David Blunkett with the words, "There is a generation of young people who are losing out by not being in education and training – their loss is also our loss."

Across the country at regional and local level, initiatives are being tested by Local Authorities in partnership with TECs (soon to be superseded by the new Learning & Skills Councils) and the Careers Service is focusing more on the disaffected. In schools the curriculum has been loosened to recognise the importance of tackling disaffection and extending vocational opportunities. Many voluntary sector initiatives are creating a pool of good practice that can be drawn upon, not least the Foyers who are working with the homeless and concentrating hard on the particular learning problems associated with homelessness. Examples abound of the 'joined-up thinking' that is required – although the links are stronger in some areas than others.

It is at the 'coal face', however, that the best lessons are to be learned and the way forward most closely mapped. Examining our 14 case studies and information from other projects, including the award-winning Acorn Project in Nottingham, it is clear that a number of common themes emerge. These are the elements which bind together a successful project and which maximise its chances of success and they are summarised at the end of this chapter.

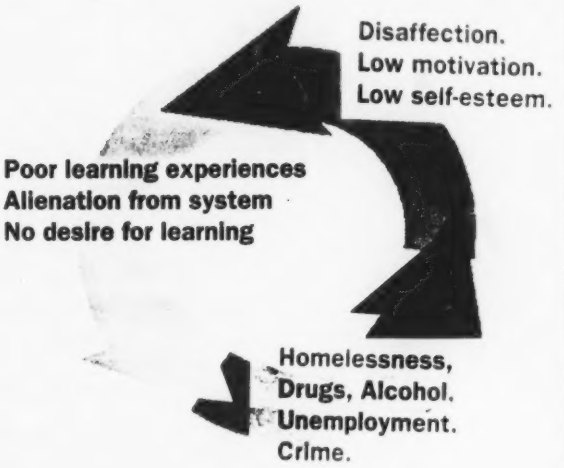
At the outset it needs to be said that the problems faced by the young people involved are many and various. Many of the projects examined identified a range of problems.

The Nottingham Acorn Project covers the depressed coal-fields area of North Nottinghamshire where, "One in five are unemployed and outside the education system, many families are experiencing second generation unemployment and its associated problems of relationship breakdown, substance abuse and crime."

The target groups of the Hertfordshire Wheels Project include the unemployed, the homeless, young people in care or excluded from school and the generally disaffected and alienated.

The various problems can be addressed in different ways and with a varied emphasis. The young people are trapped in a vicious circle – and this circle can be broken at a number of points.

There are two strands to tackling the problems and these are, of course, closely inter-linked:



- Motivating and engaging young people, and
- Managing and running a successful project.

Time and care

The key to the first seems to be a large amount of time and patience as well as respect for the learner and his or her needs and wishes.

For example, Devon & Cornwall New Start take time to assess exactly what the young person requires. "There can be no fixed or prescribed format and length of time for learning assessment. It is essential to gain the confidence and trust of the young person before moving into the assessment phase."

At Wrexham Foyer, "Training is delivered in a careful manner appropriate to the disaffected Foyer community, taking time to coax or convince the young person to want to take on training programmes. The majority of young people entering the Foyer require a high level of support and development before any seed of learning can be planted and learning opportunities considered."

On the Nottingham Acorn project, "The emphasis is on personal contact, attending to the particular problems of each young person and endeavouring to match opportunities to their interests."

Some of the most successful projects are those that start early. If young people are at risk of becoming disengaged from education, training or employment through non-attendance or non-participation, then that is the best time to re-engage them.

Once they are truly disaffected, homeless or involved in drug-dependency or crime, the job becomes much harder. As John Nash of Devon & Cornwall New Start says, "The age range was from 14–17 but in reality the majority of the clients were still (or should have been) in compulsory education. We concentrated on this group because we felt that we could make a difference to these young people before they left school."

The Peabody Trust's Computer Gym project – a mobile computer classroom which visits deprived estates on a regular basis – found that

1 CLAIRE *Individual case study*

"If you like and respect the teacher you'll listen and learn."

CLAIRE has been living at Stoke YMCA Foyer since August 1998 and has had mixed experiences of education throughout her life. Claire didn't like school, "I didn't like the teachers, didn't pay much attention. The only thing I did like was sport." After leaving school she did a variety of jobs, and before coming to the Foyer had been unemployed for twelve months. "I was angry and I had no clue what I was going to do."

In September 1998 Claire started a Leisure and Tourism course, but as it was not what she wanted to do she gave it up after a month. She then did a Directions course at the Foyer and since then has done Basic Skills, Parenting, and Life Skills.

In the future she hopes to be a childminder and plans to study an NVQ in Child Care – Health and Social.

Claire has enjoyed the training at the Foyer. "Learning can be fun as well as serious, it's not about a teacher standing around reading from a textbook." ■

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the younger the better, "Children are generally much more enthusiastic than adults, at the initial stages, and enjoy the novelty."

Children enjoy a bouncy castle at the funday to launch the first ever DLR centre on Peabody Trust's Clapham estate.

Involvement of learners

The importance of involving the learner is mentioned time and again in the successful projects studied. Double Take in Warwickshire comment, "A key element has been the involvement of young people in the design, delivery and evaluation as well as their participation in meetings, seminars and conferences."

Involving the participants can begin while a project is still in the planning stage. On one of the Peabody Trust's estates, "A fun day was held to launch the Centre – more than 100 adults and children visited the centre on the day. A video box was set up where residents could record their ideas for the Centre as well as their hopes and aspirations."

The Magazine Project in Yorkshire aims to offer a hands-on, experiential approach to learning in which, "The learners themselves are allowed to make decisions about the style and content of the end product."

Projects should involve clients at the earliest possible stage. Peabody estate residents learn the art of video.

The Wheels project in Hertfordshire concludes, "Give the young people responsibility and ownership and get them working for 'their' project." But it also sounds a note of caution: "Once the young person is attracted, the interest must be sustained – this is the hardest part."

On New Start the emphasis is involvement through a partnership. "Individual Learning Plans are negotiated between the project manager and the client. These must be realistic and achievable, by the end of term some 80% will have been completed (against a target of 75%). It is important that this is a negotiated document and not just a wish list from the young people. The Project Managers have made great efforts for the young people to take ownership of this Plan, but stress that it is important to make sure that it is developed slowly and in bite-sized units. Thus the young person can achieve parts of their Plan quickly and therefore gain motivation to continue and to progress." At Edmonton Foyer respect and commitment are paramount: "The keys to success are, firstly, regular reviews of the training that is offered, taking account of the views of learners and, secondly, the commitment of all staff, including those with a housing role, to residents'

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participation in training." At Scarborough Foyer, the respect has a tangible basis. "We have three simple rules:

- Don't patronise with jargon – it is confusing and belittling.
- Ensure that all communication is simple and understood.
- Make flexibility a priority at all times."

Overcoming negative experiences

Nearly all the disaffected people on the projects have had poor learning experiences in the past. At Scarborough Foyer: "Many have had negative experiences at school and do not see learning as a prospect they relish. A prime purpose of the Foyer is to create an environment for young people to move through – becoming more relaxed, confident and settled in order to redress some of their insecurities brought about in earlier years."

The Warwickshire Double Take Project reiterated this: "The initial attitudes to learning have a definite shared characteristic – poor school experiences which, coupled with poor self image and lack of confidence, clearly lead to negativity towards further learning. Many participants feel too alienated to gain help using more formal routes and find educational establishments threatening. None of them want to set themselves up to fail again." The same theme emerged from the Training for Life project: "The majority of clients on the course had negative experiences of statutory education provision and a deep distrust of institutions which represented authority. Consequently, a significant number had basic skills problems."

As the Campaign for Learning discovered in its research project, outlined in Chapter 2, "For both housed and homeless young people *learning* is inextricably associated with *school* and *education*.

2 JOHN — *Individual case study*

"The training was so different to teaching at school."

JOHN is 24 years old. His experience of formal education was not a happy one and in John's own words he was an underachiever. He left school at 15 without any qualifications and joined the army at 16.

John was in the army for seven years and in that time he and his partner had three children. John was discharged from the army for medical reasons and it was at this point that his life started to fall apart. Because of difficulties at home John and his partner broke up and he ended up living on the streets. His depression intensified and he even contemplated suicide. After a number of months on the street John started to attend the Furness Homeless Support Centre where he was interviewed for the Training for Life/Crisis course.

On completion of the course John travelled to London to continue the relationship he had established with TFL staff. TFL provided John with mentor support and helped him to secure accommodation at a hostel in East London. Since then John has successfully found employment and has reconciled his relationship with his partner.

John did not see the relevance of learning whilst at school because he had always planned to go into the army. He found it difficult to get involved and was generally unhappy. He took part in the project in an attempt to get his life back on track following the loss of both his family and his career.

Throughout his time on the course, and during the time he was mentored by TFL, John said how much he enjoyed it and that it had helped him to re-focus. He commented on how different it was to school and that he enjoyed the experiential style of learning rather than the classroom style of teaching he associated with schools.

John now sees how important learning is. He has no immediate plans to embark on another course, but acknowledges that continuous education and training are necessary to ensure continued employment. ■

Individual memories of these ranged from the ambivalent to the highly negative."

School memories revolved around learning being imposed, focussed on gaining qualifications, boring or inappropriate.

A lack of respect and encouragement often led to a lack of personal interest or involvement. If this was repeated by the agencies involved in 'picking up the pieces', then it might well put already disenchanted young people off learning – for life.

Thus, to re-engage a young person and bring him or her back to learning, it is essential to emphasise the practical benefits of learning in terms of finding a job. But, in providing learning it is also essential to take an non-academic approach; to respect the learner and encourage his or her interest; to make the learning interesting and fun and to experiment with a range of activities and approaches.

Making it fun

Good practice in the projects involves bringing back both mutual respect and fun into learning.

The Wheels project has an 'open door' policy and is free. Young people are encouraged to attend from all sectors of the community. The idea is to join in and become a member of a positive peer group and break destructive influences in order to create an environment in which they can achieve. It is built on the social integration of young people, staff and community volunteers, which is what makes Wheels so diverse, interesting, exciting and fun.

Claire enjoyed the training at Stoke-on-Trent Foyer: "Learning can be fun as well as serious, it's not about a teacher standing around reading from a textbook. If you like and respect the teacher you'll listen and learn."

Innovative approaches to learning in many of the case studies stress this factor. At the Gateway Foyer the staff feel that, "Although residents may not have done well, given their often unsettled childhood and negative experiences of education, this does not mean learning can never be made fun. The residents have a lot to offer and this just needs to be drawn out of them."

Many schemes stressed that informality was the key. On New Start, "The young people have benefited from the individual approach that a non time-restricted programme can deliver.

Wheels attracts young people by an 'open door' policy and offering positive activities.

Because the project staff are not part of the system or establishment they are therefore seen as being in a non-authoritarian position."

At the Gateway Foyer informal learning is recognised and valued: "Learning is becoming seen as something that can also be done for its own sake, not just as preparation for a job. Some moves towards this include setting up a range of workshops and courses such as watching films, followed by discussion; making English sentences; making picture frames and collecting recipes."

Following the 'informal' theme, a number of projects gain young people's interest through activities and outward bound. "It is no use forcing disaffected young people to go straight into training

3 NURADIN — *Individual case study*

"Learning? I'm really up for it!"

NURADIN has lived in Manchester for nine years, having come with his family, as refugees, from war-torn Somalia. When he arrived in England Nuradin could not speak English and so entered Primary School with a severe disadvantage compared to his 10-year-old classmates. Moving on to Secondary School Nuradin found it very hard, but many, though not all, of the teachers were willing to go out of their way to help him get over the cultural and language barriers. Although school was at times very difficult for Nuradin, on the whole he enjoyed it, especially sport. He also had the advantage that his family were very supportive.

At 16 Nuradin got six GCSEs but felt that he should have done a lot better as, at this time, he was going through some very difficult problems at home. It was soon after this that he moved on to a young person's hostel, which he found, "Very hard, having to learn to cook, and budget." Whilst living at the hostel Nuradin retook his GCSEs and the year after that entered a GNVQ course in Health and Social Care. It was at this time that Nuradin entered the Manchester Foyer: "The Foyer is now like a home to me, everyone is really involved with what you're doing and are always working with you."

The GNVQ was really enjoyable for Nuradin and, though he's keeping his options open, he plans to do the Advanced GNVQ in Health and Social Care (the college have invited him back). "I'm not a great academic but find this course really practical. It's your own

responsibility to get out there and do your research, and do interviews, and speak to companies."

Nuradin's long term plan is to become a psychotherapist and to study Psychology at university. How does Nuradin feel about learning now? "I'm really up for it! My one ambition in life is to get a degree. Coming to Europe has given me a second chance in life and many of the people my age I left behind in Somalia are probably dead or crazy. Sometimes it's hard to get on with just £40 a week and I still need help, which the Foyer provides me with, with my English." ■

or work experience. One method we use involves offering a whole range of challenging activities, including horse riding, skating and outward-bound activities. These are attractive and help people build confidence and develop team-work and communication skills," say the Double Take project.

Outward bound activity is central to the Training for Life project. "The curriculum model is essentially experiential in its characteristics. It uses the responses generated by activity, interactive analysis and interview to facilitate reflection and commitment to personal change. Feedback from clients and Crisis staff suggests that this approach is very innovative for homeless people and was viewed as very effective (especially in the short term)."

Outward bound experience on the Training for Life project leads to personal development.

Motivation

Whatever the reasons for it, and there are many, most often the lack of interest in learning is related to a lack of motivation, a state of disinterest. This has been addressed in a number of ways: "If the tutors (at Gateway Foyer) have high expectations then this is found to rub off on the young person. Often the residents need confidence instilled in them and all seem to have more potential than they often realise."

Other projects found that an important factor in achieving self-confidence was developing self-awareness. Training for Life believe this can be helped by: "Tolerance of others, leading to teamwork skills, problem solving, communication skills, consideration of others' decision-making, and acceptance of others' leadership skills. Looking outwards can help to solve internal problems."

Incentives can be useful. The Manchester Foyer operates a number of 'carrots' for those doing the training. "Foyer residents who have raised their level of achievement can have the reward of moving into large self-contained flats, much larger and more private than the smaller rooms with shared kitchens and bathrooms. Those completing the Community and Culture Courses have an option of a working trip abroad, which can vary from a one-week to a six-month placement on a scheme in a foreign country. Completion of the Hotel and Catering course guarantees a work placement and an interview in the catering industry."

But the softly, softly, approach, whilst widespread and often necessary, is not always the most effective. On the 'Youth at Risk' residential courses,"Each young person is required to identify three personal goals that they wish to work on. Usually there is one around education/employment, one around building a relationship with a member of their family and another around crime or drugs. After the residential there is a nine-month follow-through programme in which they will continue the work started on the residential, towards building a different future. The content of the course-room sessions often require the young people to look at themselves and how they deal with situations in their lives. They are looking to model new or different behaviour. The sessions can be quite confrontational."

This can lead to very positive developments: "Their attitudes towards learning are sometimes very visible in that they might become aggressive or just storm out of the course-room when encountering situations that they are unable to work through. This programme helps them see themselves in a different light, so when the programme ends you see a different person underneath all the anger and frustration they once had. In the nine-month follow-through, progress towards their personal goals is made through identifying small action steps with which the committed partner can support them. It is very hard for them to deal with their problems

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but they can get through it – step by step. When the programme has finished they will have the ability to *go it alone*."

Support and staff

Motivation is inextricably linked with providing the right kind of support. Real support is offered at the Gateway Foyer: "One recent successful innovation has been for tutors to act as mentors to the residents and develop wider, stronger relationships. Many young people have not been able to gain from education, partly because of a lack of parental support. This is something the tutors feel they help to redress – providing a role model so that the young person, experiencing the knowledge

4 ANDREW *Individual case study*

"I can do that."

ANDREW was a shy and withdrawn person. His school held little hope of GCSE results, his attendance in classes was poor, he rarely did his homework and was easily led. Andrew had been excluded from his previous school for theft. This was something he regretted as he hoped to join the army. He never smiled, mumbled and his eye contact was poor. He found some difficulty in concentration.

He had been unable to do his work experience at school because he had wanted to work with an electrical company; at the last moment he had been turned down because their work was in the dockyard and his previous caution for theft prevented him from getting a pass.

The New Start project found Andrew work experience with the Army. They agreed to give him some experience in the electrical and mechanical areas.

On his return he was much more relaxed. The supervisor at his work experience had been very positive. The written report he received from the army was to state that he was a suitable candidate and would do well in the services.

His mother came to the New Start project and mentioned that Andrew was a twin. His twin was still at his previous school and was apparently a bit of a 'star'; good at sports, quite good academically, popular and confident.

Andrew attended all the New Start group sessions about sexual health, drugs awareness, employer expectations and the police and showed a side of himself that the school had not seen. He had some leadership qualities, would take time to help others understand things if needed and took the lead in personal development. He was good at practical tasks and excellent in outdoor pursuits. At times, he showed a sense of humour and often said he was determined to better his grades to ensure he could get in the army. Feedback from the school suggested he was trying harder and his coursework was being brought up to date. One month he was even awarded the pupil of the month award in his year group for Maths.

At the Army careers office he was advised to return just after his exams. He was heartened by the soldier there who told him that he too had not thought he would get good grades but had worked especially hard and gained Bs because he really wanted to join the Army, "I can do that," he said.

One of the activities in which Andrew took part was a series of personal development sessions. He was supportive and helpful to others and showed leadership skills.

He was invited to participate in a Tall Ships 10-day sailing where, his reference said, he demonstrated very high levels of competence, reliability and co-operation. He supported both staff and other young people alike.

After his exams Andrew passed an army test to become a mechanic and they are now waiting for his results to see if he can do that through an apprenticeship or as an ordinary soldier. Andrew can see the benefit to himself but his mother has noticed it more than anyone. She just said, "Thank you for giving my son back to me." ■

and commitment of a responsible adult, has more intense support and a sounding board to confide in."

A similar approach is used by the Youth at Risk programme in Knowsley: "We train local volunteers to work with the young people so that they get a sense that they belong to their own community. Each one has a committed partner for the whole of the programme to help and support them through their difficulties. This role is that of a performance coach rather than just mentoring support."

New Start makes the same point slightly differently: "Each manager has shown particular strengths, but the essential skill they have all shown is the ability to work with and to understand young people. It is important that all Gateway workers have sound youth work practice built into their personal development."

"The most successful approach to helping the young people is found to be on a one-to-one basis."

Key personnel are also vital organisationally. From Scarborough: "A key move towards gaining interest in learning and the introduction of the learning opportunities was taken on last year through the recruitment of a project worker for training and employment." From Wrexham: "Following the construction of this purpose built Foyer, a Training Officer was recruited in June 1998 to develop approaches in learning and training." And finally from Gateway: "One of their (the trainers') biggest contributions, apart from actually sharing their skills and knowledge with residents, is in creating their appetite for learning and encouraging them to want to develop themselves and perceive education as a positive experience."

An initiative in Lancashire, run by a partnership between the local TEC and a business school, is recognising the importance of good staff. A training course for trainers is giving them skills in subjects like special needs, adolescent development, counselling, confidence building and health and social issues.

Further barriers

Not all the young people involved in the pilot studies were homeless, but for both homeless and housed there were still a range of other barriers to overcome.

Travel and the location of learning opportunities is one such: "One of the Digital Learning Ring's strengths is its accessibility to a wide range of people – because it is estate-based. For those on low incomes, the cost of travelling to college can be a disincentive to learning. Equally, the informal and local nature of the DLR centres is an attraction."

Childcare is an issue which one project in particular addresses: "Homelessness and disaffection with learning can be compounded when small children are involved. Edmond Court Foyer was built as a hostel for homeless parents and young children, meeting the needs of young people for whom getting back into work is complicated by the need for child care, as well as accommodation and help with training and job search."

The same case study however provides a postitive note: "Young parents experience greater pressures on their time than other single homeless people, but also greater incentives to take up training – partly because it provides a break from childcare, but also because of the importance of being able to acquire skills in order to provide for the family."

The Campaign for Learning's research identified another motivation leading towards enhanced learning: "Interestingly, it is young people who are parents themselves whose lifestyle becomes more child-focussed and less dominated by the social scene."

Drugs and alcohol raise their ugly heads time and again: "Many (over half) are drug or alcohol dependent. Their needs not only stem from the young person having earlier negative experiences in education, but a range of problems leading to low confidence, poor self-esteem and poor communication skills." A space for learning is important. At Scarborough Foyer, a careers drop-in facility and training suite are provided through the training project worker having his own room to meet and liaise with the young visitors. "This is a very useful resource, as the most successful approach to helping the young people is found to be on a one-to-one basis. Previous efforts to encourage learning through group meetings and discussions have been tried but this was found to be the most fruitful approach. Generally our finding is that immaturity gets in

the way when too many young people get together."

When a young person's problems with motivation have been overcome, there can still be other obstacles: "John has surprised his ex-teachers by wishing to come back and join the 6th Form at school to do his GCSE's. This has been refused because his attendance in Year 11 was below 90%."

On New Start in Devon and Cornwall, "There have been incidents of scepticism and mistrust from some teachers about our work. Another concern is the reluctance of a few teachers to give the young people another chance during their time on New Start. (Even though) the young people have changed in many, many cases."

5 RONAN *Individual case study*

"I'm happy to come to work and I look forward to it."

RONAN'S earlier educational achievements were hampered following conveyer-belt expulsions from two educational establishments. Fighting was the significant reason for the expulsions, prompting the local authority to place Ronan in a girls' school in a last ditch attempt at providing him with an education. Sex in the toilet fuelled a subsequent expulsion. Ronan sat a couple of exams and failed.

His chronic dislike of school was due to the patronising attitude of teachers, implanting the belief that he was a no-hoper and could aspire to nothing. Learning opportunities at this point were not on his agenda.

A catalogue of low-skilled jobs ensued, with Ronan drifting from one to another, often bullied and made to do degrading tasks.

A period of depression inevitably followed and Ronan was placed under a psychiatrist who prescribed medication. The medication had a very adverse effect and altered his behaviour. He became very aggressive and volatile and after a period of time decided to stop taking his tablets.

Ronan's girlfriend was pregnant with his baby and the imminent birth caused him to take stock of his life. He was jealous of people and what they had in their lives – houses, cars, holidays. He witnessed and envied the opportunities offered to a resident on a New Deal placement at the Foyer. The realisation suddenly hit home. To get things in life you have to work for it! This was the path he had to follow.

Currently training as a volunteer awaiting a New Deal placement in the Foyer Core Building, Ronan has now 'got a life', is undertaking a CLAIT course and is booked onto a Diploma in Interpersonal Skills. Ronan values and enjoys both his placement and his training.

The responsibility and the trust that the Foyer has placed in him have motivated him to pursue his chosen career in catering. While the Foyer's resident chef is on annual leave Ronan is responsible for the cooking, the till and general running of the Bistro, a task at which he has excelled.

A New Deal placement will lead to an NVQ in catering and a better quality future for him and his family. ■

Several projects mentioned that local employers were very positive, but others found difficulty in finding work, work-placements or job training opportunities. "We need employers who are sympathetic to these youngsters," was a comment from another New Start project in Blackburn. "We have a team of people going out persuading employers to take on a young person from us, months in advance of them being available. It's a big job."

Positive learning experiences

There have been numerous examples of positive outcomes from the various projects studied. The Magazine Project in Yorkshire concluded: "Through the sessions, participants developed an enthusiasm for learning. They participated in a structured programme and worked effectively as a team – making decisions and deciding upon action. For learners who had lacked confidence in their own learning abilities, this was a very positive outcome. Clients were encouraged to write about, or photograph, areas of interest to them – thus fuelling their involvement in, and commitment to, the associated learning. Learning such skills as writing, photography, design and editing and softer skills such as communication, respect for others' views and team-working thus came more naturally. The title of the magazine 'Full of It' was chosen by the project team."

During the (Double Take) project; "Attitudes to learning become more positive as the course progresses. Some individuals express genuine delight on achieving actual qualifications (at whatever level). The majority of young people are given the confidence that each of them has the potential to succeed at something."

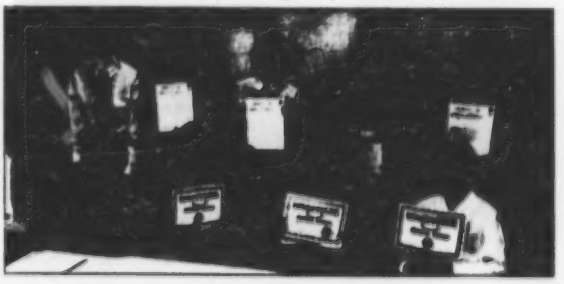
The Training for Life project produced some 'soft' but quite specific outcomes:

- Self awareness – tolerance of others.
- Self confidence – teamwork skills.
- Problem solving and communication skills
- Consideration of others, decision making.
- Acceptance of others, leadership skills.

Many of those who once 'hated learning' go on to Further and even to Higher education. To take just one example from Edmund's Court Foyer: "In September 1998 12 residents enrolled at East Birmingham College to undertake courses in Electronics, Access to Art & Design, Access to Higher Education, Multi-skills Programme, Legal Secretaries Certificate, Computer Studies, Maths, English, Science, Childcare, Catering and Media. A further 11 enrolled at Colleges around the city, taking a variety of courses including Sound Production, Administration, IT and Welding/ Fabrication."

The final result of the Magazine Project.

Foyer residents with their qualifications.



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Holistic approach

The need for this was mentioned in nearly all the projects studied. The raison d'être of the Foyers encompasses this attitude. The Double Take Project (Warwickshire) finds it, "Vital to take an holistic approach to the barriers that face young people."

This is mirrored by New Start who say, "Young people may have issues to resolve which would require input from other agencies, e.g. Social Services, Probation etc. An holistic approach is needed, not just a 'learning' one."

Scarborough Foyer find that a "very disaffected group of young people can be reached with a person-centred holistic approach from a committed staff team."

And Training for Life's ethos is the belief that it is not enough to just address the vocational training needs of young people. "To ensure that the intervention is sustainable it has to be holistic; it has to take into account and address the way in which young people manage their lives."

6 CHRIS *Individual case study*

"School was a waste of time – I didn't learn anything."

CHRIS failed to attend school on a regular basis, especially during his last two years. He left with no qualifications. He felt school had failed him and that he had not learned anything of any significance.

He began to get into trouble with the police and was convicted of vehicle offences and petty crime. He was given Community Service by the court and the Probation Service referred him to the project to complete his Community Service. He was given manual work by the project. At first he did not want to co-operate and he did not want to take part in anything that did not involve driving and stealing cars. However, little by little, he began to take an interest and after he finished his Community Service he was motivated to come to the project every day and to get involved in all the other activities and programmes.

After a very short time he saw the difference a few changes could make to his life and he very soon achieved a positive attitude and wanted to achieve more by finding a job. He started to mix with a different group of friends and became more interested in learning. His offending stopped and he began to behave in a civil manner. He decided he wanted to settle down and get some qualifications and, perhaps above all, not go to prison.

At the project he learned numerous practical skills as well as some personal ones such as confidence, discipline and a respect for others.

Chris has used the project for about three years and the staff have seen him grow into a respectable, responsible young adult who has settled down. He is now in full-time employment, driving a delivery van. He has taken on many responsibilities including a partner and three children. ■

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Paying the bills

When it comes to managing and running a successful project, the key is a flexible approach to funding and involvement with as many partners as possible.

The projects analysed involve a great variety of funding. Some of this is very imaginative, though there does not seem to be much from the private sector and this is one area that would bear further investigation. There are also problems with inflexibility (often where the FEFC is involved) and, of course, there is never enough. "Additional funding is required to support the employment and training function of Foyer staff and develop more training initiatives," say Edmonds Court Foyer.

Funding comes from a wide variety of sources. Some comes from Europe (the ESF), from central and local government, from LEAs and TECs and from charities and individuals. For many projects it is ongoing: "Start grant applications early and keep fund-raising," says the 'Wheels' project.

Partnerships are as important in providing adequate funding as in managing the project. Charities are often involved: "The Yeovil Foyer was set up by a partnership of Knightstone Housing Association and the local authority and funding was provided mostly by the local TEC and Comic Relief."

In Manchester, Clair Coward, the Foyer manager, "developed partnerships with Manchester College of Arts and Technology (MANCAT) and Manchester City College, and the latter provided seven out of fourteen networked PCs for a training room and one full-time and one part-time member of staff." Funding again came from various sources: "Bids were put in to provide a variety of training firstly for New Deal Gateway, for which the great majority of Foyer residents were eligible, and further bids for the European Social Fund (ESF) and Adult and Community Learning Fund (ACLF) were made."

The Peabody Trust's DLR Project, which is a five-year programme, will cost a total of £2.7 million, of which £1.3 million is an SRB grant. This SRB funding has levered in money from other sources such as colleges, local authorities and TECs.

Managing success

Just as partnership is the key word when accessing funding, so it is crucial to successful running and management. For example Double Take, in Warwickshire, was instigated by members of the Careers Service, including the Chief Executive and an employee with expertise and experience in dealing with marginalised young people. From there a whole range of networked agencies have been involved, including the police, training providers, the local TEC, the youth service, health agencies, probation and social services, colleges, employers and voluntary organisations. All of these organisations are on the project steering group.

The Learning Gateway project, which has just started in Leicestershire, involves going out into the community to help those in need or at risk and providing them with personal advisers. It is a partnership between the Probation Service, the National Youth Agency, the TEC and the Careers Service.

Partners on the Learning Gateway project.

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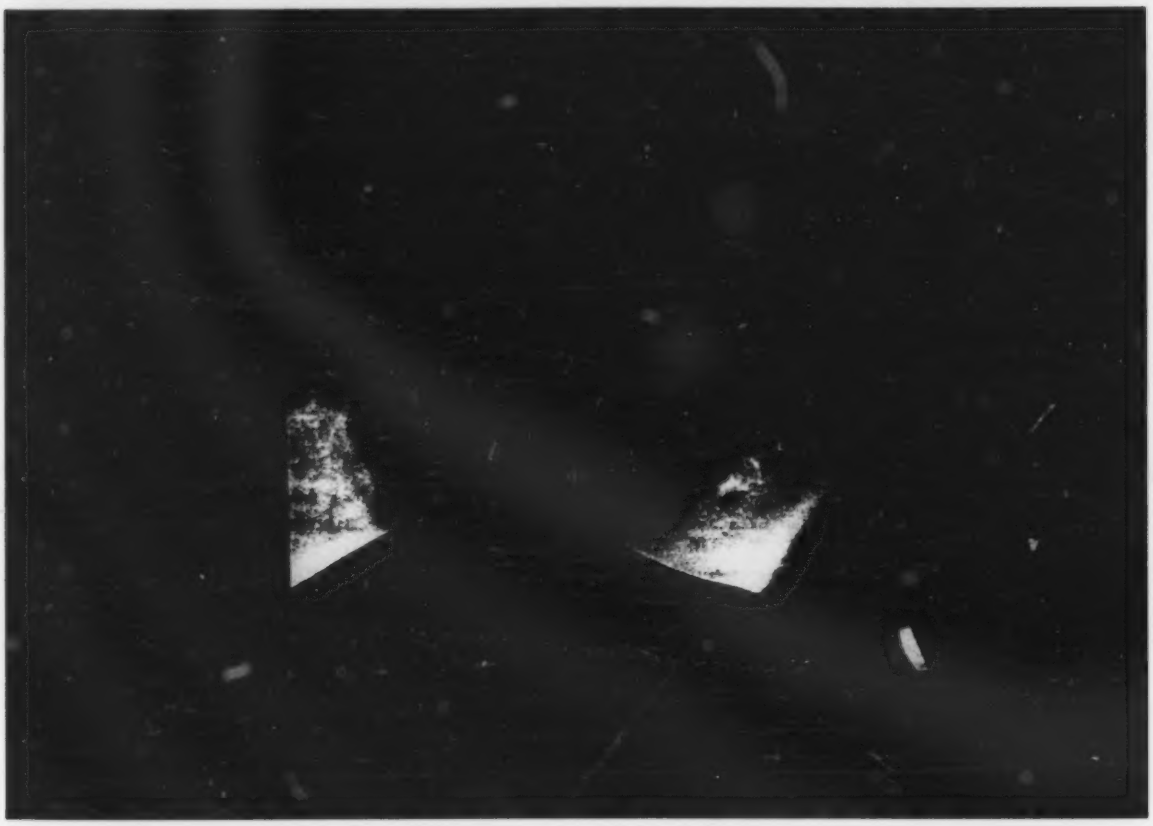

Team building and car building on the Training Taster project.

Peabody Trust's DLR Project has many key partners in the scheme: the London Borough of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Kensington and Chelsea and Wandsworth, Newham College and AZTEC and LETEC.

The training/computer room at Yeovil Foyer was developed in partnership with the local FE college, whose close working with the Foyer is shown by the fact that the Vice-Principal is a Foyer Board member and the Foyer Manager is a governor at the college.

On the Acorn Project, "We rely on a good inter-agency structure."

At the 'Training Taster' project on Tyneside, which helps young people by giving them an introduction to the world of work, the partnership involves the local TEC, the Education welfare service, providers, schools and the careers service.

There are occasional problems, as New Start in Devon and Cornwall found: "One of the major problems with partnerships is that, although commitment has been made at Chief Officer level, there is often suspicion and mistrust at lower levels within the organisations. We have attempted to overcome this and ensure that the messages from the strategic group find their way down the organisation to those practitioners at the bottom.

"The other major problem is that there is a reluctance to share resources in some partnerships. Also there is a certain level of mistrust, especially between the statutory and voluntary organisation members. In many cases this is the first time they have sat together discussing ways of joint working."

Making partnerships work

Finally there have been some interesting observations on how partnerships must work. New Start offers some key lessons from their partnership

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experiences to date:

- There is a need for strong leadership to enable the partnerships to develop. This 'leader' needs ideally to be someone independent from the key partner organisations.
- Partnerships must operate at all levels in each organisation – from the strategic to the operational personnel, whilst making sure that the correct people are involved at each level.
- Strong links between all levels of the partnership must be established early in its life.
- Communications must be planned and evaluated at regular intervals.
- All partners should be kept actively involved, maintaining commitment and every opportunity taken to celebrate success.

Double Take in Warwickshire sum up the lessons: "A number of lessons have been learned over the four years of our project. These are the most important:

- Ensure the whole team is clear about what is being undertaken and why. Plus how the roles and responsibilities sit together.
- Ensure other agencies are informed and consulted and that roles and responsibilities are clear.
- Start small, i.e. pilot an idea and then expand once the model has proved appropriate.
- Listen to the young people and respond to their needs, not the organisation's."

Sound advice

The final comment comes from the Wheels project, which offers advice that anyone working with disaffected young people will find invaluable:

- Invest in committed, dynamic, flexible and enthusiastic staff.
- Community volunteers are one key to success at the early stages of development of the project.
- Give the young people responsibility and ownership and get them working for 'their' project.
- Create a good image – good stationery, i.e. letterheads, business cards, and ensure efficient administration – layout of letters, good communications.
- Start grant applications and keep fund-raising.
- Insist on a pro-active partnership rather than an advisory panel.
- Market yourself – instigate networks.
- Use local newspapers – tell them what you are doing.
- Get funders and potential funders to visit the project and meet with the young people.
- Be flexible and have the ability to change direction when needed.
- If a programme is not working, cancel it or change it.
- Adapt programmes to appeal to the target.
- Make the project fun and SAFE.
- Remember that everyone is equal.
- Work to short time-scales, achieve quickly. Keep planning, mapping and words to the minimum. Young people get bored of waiting. 'Instant' is the key word.
- If you arrange an event – do it. Don't let young people down.
- Never forget that young people are the number one priority.
- Gain the confidence of all local agencies – work with them.
- Say 'no' sometimes; you can't do and be everything.
- Record work, projects and achievements.
- Record lots of visual evidence – photographs, videos.
- Produce professional reports.
- Work with and encourage local politicians, councillors and dignitaries to support you.
- Make sure the project is busy and exciting.

The organisations in detail

EDMONDS COURT, BIRMINGHAM, was built in 1993 following a Housing Association grant of £1.1 million and an extra donation of £100,000 from a private sector building company. There are 48 units of accommodation, providing housing for single people, couples and lone parents. Edmonds Court was developed into a Foyer in 1997 in partnership with East Birmingham College. It now delivers a comprehensive programme of vocational training, through the ESF Integra initiative.

WREXHAM FOYER was officially opened in October 1998. A Training Officer was recruited in June 1998 to develop approaches in learning and

training. The Foyer staff team includes several volunteers. Over half the Foyer community have a drug or alcohol problem. The Foyer has established partnerships with local training providers to offer a range of on-site basic skills training appropriate to individuals' needs, as well as providing access to other training and education facilities in the area.

STOKE-ON-TRENT YMCA FOYER opened in 1978, has 94 bed-spaces, and a variety of leisure and training facilities. To link training with accommodation, a strong working relationship has developed with Staffordshire TEC. From this has started a ten-week 'Directions' course for disaffected 16–18-year -olds, who come from school with few or no qualifications. The Foyer has developed a number of courses, is an accredited City and Guilds provider and is looking at the New Deal again.

YEOVIL TRINITY FOYER opened in 1996 and has 39 rooms. It was set up through a partnership between a Housing Association and the local authority, with funding provided mostly by the local TEC and Comic Relief. The Foyer takes in residents aged 16–25 years, many of whom have had bad experiences of education in the past. The Foyer offers certain training courses on-site and has a computer training room developed in partnership with the local FE college.

7 PETER *Individual case study*

"Once you've achieved something, it can't be taken away."

PETE was a low achiever at school. He felt there had been a lack of support from the school and suffered from bullying, as well as having other personal problems. He was also a carer, and when he left school was not interested in learning; he just wanted a job.

When the Double Take bus parked outside his home he joined in because he felt included, the atmosphere was informal, he was listened to and was offered support and encouragement. Relevant information was promised and supplied.

Pete enjoyed the flexibility offered which suited him as a carer. Informal settings were important. He gained a lot of satisfaction and was given the confidence to go on to do a higher level qualification with a college.

He now feels he is likely to continue in learning. He has achieved greater acceptance both socially and with prospective employers. He has enhanced self-esteem and is more confident when meeting new people. As he says: "Once you've achieved something, it can't be taken away, plus, it's a positive aspect of your life. Double Take opens the door to more opportunities."

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THE MANCHESTER FOYER, based in Hulme, opened in June 1998. It has 61 bed spaces and a variety of training facilities. Many of the residents have had very bad experiences of education and life in general; the Foyer has also had a few Somalis who have come over to the UK as refugees. The project was developed by St Vincent's Housing Association, and has partnerships with two FE colleges, one of which provided a network of PCs for the training room and two members of staff.

HOME AND DRY (SCARBOROUGH FOYER) evolved out of a drop-in centre for young homeless people. The Foyer has a 'core' administration building and has residential accommodation out in the community. The drop-in centre still operates, offering advice, information and practical services to all young people in housing need, as well as residents. Employment and training advice is available to all service users; most are aged 16–25, some have slept rough. A large number have basic skills needs.

Scarborough (Home and Dry) Foyer.

THE GATEWAY FOYER, established five years ago, currently houses 116 residents, all of whom have access to the project's training centre. The Foyer has a strong provision of in-house training supported by a Training Advisor, a full-time and a part-time IT tutor, and two other full-time tutors who cover a range of areas such as English and maths, basic skills and living skills. One recent successful innovation has been for tutors to act as mentors to the residents.

DIGITAL LEARNING RING is a community-based distance learning network, bringing learning opportunities directly onto five estates in London. The first of the five centres in this SRB-funded programme opened in 1999 at the Peabody Trust Clapham Estate. The estates are among the most deprived in the country with high levels of benefit dependency and many people with few qualifications. The courses are primarily in IT, business administration, customer service, literacy and numeracy.

THE MAGAZINE PROJECT is a partnership project in Yorkshire involving Dewsbury College, the Outlook Young Person's Team, SHARP, Stonham Housing and Eastthorpe Visual Arts. It is aimed at 16–25-year-olds in Kirklees who are residents of temporary accommodation and/or clients of the region's drug and alcohol agency. The project involves disaffected young people in an experiential learning project – the production of a magazine providing both information and entertainment, aimed at their own peer group.

THE NEW START PARTNERSHIP PROJECT IN DEVON & CORNWALL started in 1997 led by PROSPER, formerly Devon & Cornwall TEC, and the Careers Service. The other partners are local LEAs and Youth Services. The first phase of the project identifies the scale of disaffection and the range of opportunities and initiatives available for those outside learning or at risk of becoming disengaged. The age range is from 14 to 17 but the majority of clients are still in compulsory education.

TRAINING FOR LIFE has worked since 1994 with a multitude of disadvantaged and disenchanted young people to improve their life and

vocational skills and, ultimately, enhance their employability. It works with people who want to be in work but who are at risk of social and economic marginalisation. TFL tries to create a bridge between the vocational and life-management aspects of an individual, enhance their self-esteem, help them find and keep employment and improve their health and general fitness.

In 1997 TFL teamed up with Crisis, the national charity for homeless people, to develop their Skills for Life programme in centres throughout the country.

YOUTH AT RISK is a national charity that designs, develops and delivers innovative community programmes which enable some of society's most disaffected and difficult youngsters to accept responsibilities and transform their lives.

Youth at Risk in Knowsley trains local volunteers to work with the young people so that they get a sense that they belong to their own community.

The programme has three phases, enrolment, a residential course and a nine-month follow-through.

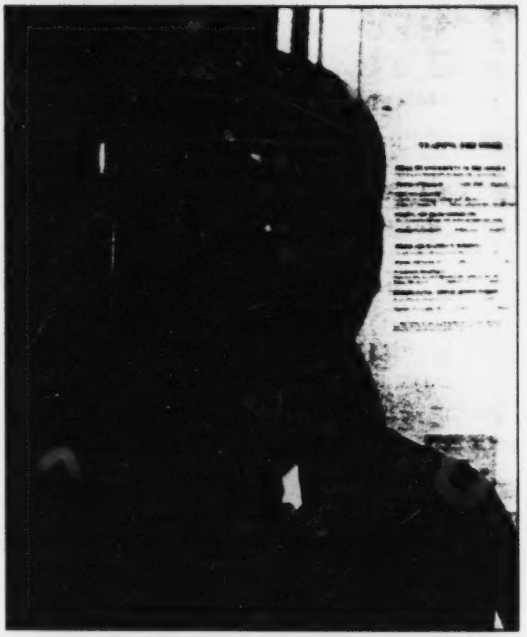
8 GAVIN *Individual case study*

"I'm planning to start up my own record label business."

GAVIN is a 19-year-old resident at the Gateway Foyer who has been there since December 1998. He grew up in South London and left school at the age of 16 with five GCSEs. This did not really reflect his full learning potential. His time at school was not the most negative experience ever, but he was somewhat misled and influenced by peer pressure. Much of his support and advice since being at the Foyer has been from the Training and Employment Manager; he has expressed gratitude at receiving this.

Gavin had always had a keen interest in computers and appreciated access to the IBM computers available at the Foyer. The Foyer enabled him to study its accredited computer course and receive a European 'Computer Driving Licence'. Also since being at the Foyer, Gavin has successfully completed an electronics course at the local college which he feels will always be a useful skill to carry through life with him; he also felt this course contributed positively towards his knowledge of mathematics.

Potentially one of the most useful schemes the Foyer has introduced Gavin to, in his pursuit for independence, is the Prince's Trust. Through this he has learned how to submit a business plan and a grant application.



Hopefully, if he receives funds, he will be able to start up his own business as a self-employed entrepreneur.

Gavin has found the main help from the Foyer to be in easing access to opportunities and providing support throughout, with approachable staff always being at hand to help. Gavin also expressed gratitude at the debt management course made available through the Foyer; he feels this will always be a life-useful skill. ■

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THE WHEELS COMMUNITY PROJECT started life 16 years ago as a motor project led by the Probation Service and the Hertfordshire Care Trust, originally to reduce auto-related crime and improve road safety for young people.

The project has dynamically changed its outputs, aims and objectives and widened its client base and is now a community project working with the unemployed, the homeless and disaffected. Wheels attracts young people by offering positive activities in the motor/driving field.

THE DOUBLE TAKE PROJECT is a Warwickshire Careers Service initiative, started in 1994. It uses strategies including outreach, inter-agency working and client-centred approaches to re-engage young people who haven't been able to access or sustain education, training or employment. It works with the homeless, offenders, substance mis-users, people with learning difficulties and non-achievers as well as the physical/sensory impaired, bullied young people and those lacking basic skills.

Other information was obtained from:

- The Acorn Project (Nottingham)
- Learning Gateway (Leicester)
- Training Taster (Tyneside)
- Runshaw Business Centre 'Train the Trainer' course
- New Start (Blackburn).

9 KENNY *Individual case study*

"I'm learning now – and I respect myself more."

KENNY, currently resident at Wrexham Foyer, did not do particularly well at school and left at the age of sixteen with a few low-grade GCSEs. After leaving school he got involved with some petty criminals and was soon in trouble with the police. This has meant Kenny has always suffered difficulties in finding and holding down work and has had problems with accommodation. He has been kicked out of home and other previous rented addresses. Some of his previous work included bouncing and temporary bits of handy work. None of this was of a continuous nature and he had always avoided any real level of responsibility.

Occasionally it appeared as if he would be doing all right but this would never last long. He built up debts, many from Housing Association rents, and badly needed to become financially responsible. Kenny is now paying them off–having learned how to manage money through support from the Foyer.

Much of this contributed to Kenny becoming a dependent cannabis user, but, thanks to the support of the Foyer, he now has this problem under control. The Foyer has provided stability so his problems can be worked on and addressed, but it is recognised this cannot happen instantly.

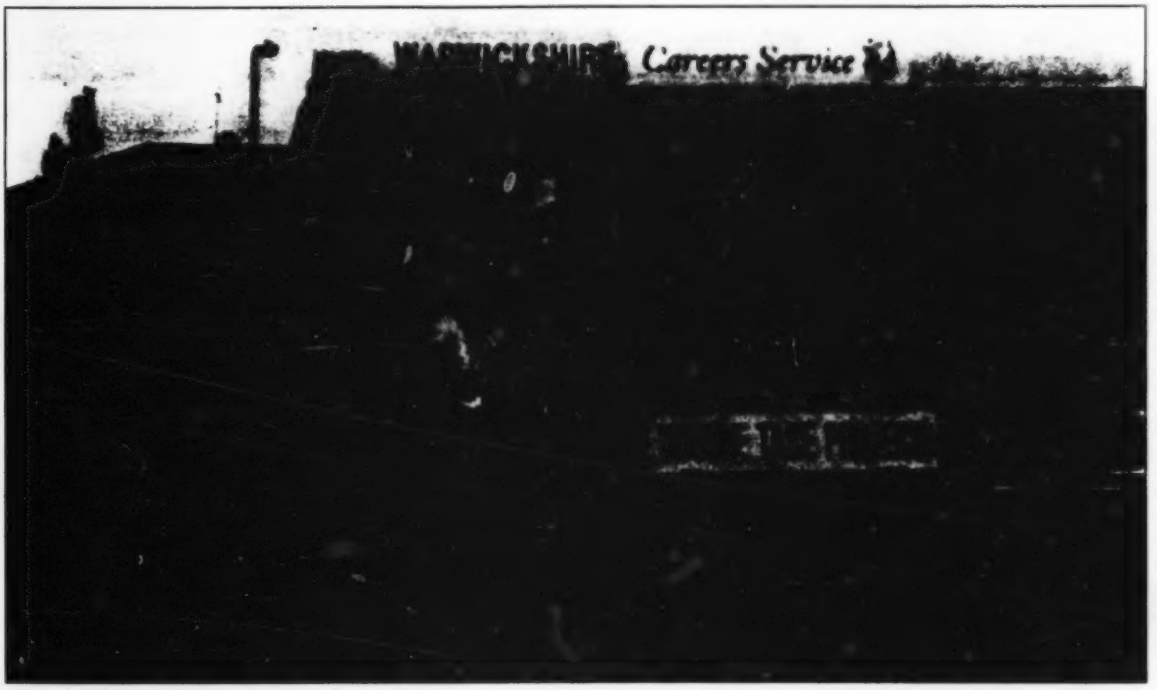
Kenny is currently working on a New Deal placement as a teacher support worker and putting in a lot of effort. He wants to help in the success of the homework club that is being set up and finds it very useful in getting his own work done. He wants this placement to work and contribute towards improving his study skills.

His New Deal placement is at a special needs school where he has grown to be well liked by staff and students in the school and they are now prepared to take him on long- term.

He is now hoping to work towards an NVQ Level 3 in child-care studies but still needs support; he is going to do some key skills training in preparation for this.

The Key Skills Unit helps introduce a lot of Foyer residents to learning and one in two of the residents do complete it. It is a good way of easing them back into learning.

Kenny has now volunteered to be a spokesperson for the Foyer residents and is respected in the Foyer community and, most importantly, now by himself. He has recently got engaged to a girl who is also resident at the Foyer and who is herself just about to start college. Kenny and his fiancée are nearly ready to move on from the Foyer. ■



The Double Take project's Learning Bus.

10 ANNABELLE *Individual case study*

"At school, I didn't want to learn and they didn't want to teach me."

ANNABELLE is eighteen and has been living at the Foyer for six months; her experiences of education have been rather mixed. Annabelle didn't enjoy school at all, she was bullied and, as she said, "There was mutual disrespect between me and the teachers." On top of these problems Annabelle had moved from foster home to foster home which meant that she had been in three different schools since she was 11.

At 15 Annabelle was expelled from school and moved to a Pupil Referral Unit where she was studying GCSEs for four mornings a week and did one week at the local FE college. This was an experience she much preferred and took two GCSEs but failed them due to having to leave her foster home the day before the exams. When she was 16, Annabelle enrolled at Yeovil College and studied for four GCSEs in English, Sociology, Dance, and Human Physiology and a CLAIT course. She had decided it was 'time to knuckle down' and in the end got three Cs and a pass in CLAIT but failed Human Physiology.

The year after this Annabelle started a BTEC 1st Diploma in Performing Arts, which she thoroughly enjoyed, and found very demanding. There were times when Annabelle thought about packing in the course, due to some of the personal relationships within the group, but she stuck at it and, three months after starting it, moved into the Foyer. There has been extra support from the staff in helping Annabelle get through the more difficult days. Annabelle hopes to do a BTEC National Diploma in Performing Arts, starting in the coming academic year, if she passes her current course. ■

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11 MARGARET — Individual case study

"I just thought training courses were 'not for me'."

MARGARET had had poor experiences of formal learning and thought that any further courses would be either inaccessible or 'not for her'. Travel and time barriers made the prospect of returning to learn seem particularly daunting. She did have some basic computer knowledge when she started the course at the West Silvertown Digital Learning Ring pilot project, but needed to extend her skills. She was part of the first intake of participants at the pilot scheme which opened 18 months ago. The course taught her intermediate Word, Excel and Access. For Margaret, there were many advantages to the distance learning package.

"I found it very relaxing to be able to go at your own pace and not having to go into the centre at set times. But the facilitator was always there if you got really stuck – or you could get in contact with Newham College."

Margaret lives on the West Silvertown estate and so she found the location very convenient. She also found the quality of the course much higher than anything she had undertaken in the past. "I found that with the course at the Digital Learning Ring it explains things in more detail and explains why you're doing it."

Margaret found the course so instructive that when the position of facilitator came available she applied for it and got the job! She finds it useful having been on the other side of the fence because she knows what kind of problems people encounter. ■

12 JOE — Individual case study

"I'm going to start again."

JOE came on to the Youth at Risk programme when he was 15 and is now 16.

At school he was interested in subjects that he found he could do and not interested in subjects that he couldn't. His progress through school was limited by his tendency to be involved in confrontation with teachers during lessons. This happened both in subjects that he enjoyed and did not enjoy.

The initial invitation letter from Youth at Risk had a significant impact, as did the follow-up presentation. It instilled in him a belief that he could do something with his life and that his future could be markedly different from his past.

He has learnt different ways of approaching conflict situations and has come to an understanding that he doesn't always have all the answers.

He wishes to start again, realising what he has missed out on and that resoluteness and determination are valuable assets to have, rather than contemplating immediate failure.

He has surprised his teachers by wishing to join the 6th Form at school to do his GCSEs. This has been refused because his attendance at Year 11 was below 90%.

Joe is aware that a good education does not always guarantee success, but he regards training at a young age as something useful to fall back on in later life. He sees it as being useful in the future for presentations and writing reports or letters. ■

KEY LEARNING POINTS:

- **Be patient**
- **Always respect the learner.**
- **Ensure that all communication is clear, simple and understood.**
- **Make flexibility a priority at all times. Take a non-academic approach.**
- **Encourage interest.**
- **Make the learning interesting and fun.**
- **Experiment with a range of activities and approaches.**

TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL PROJECT:

- **Ensure the whole team is clear about what is being undertaken and why. Inform and consult other agencies.**
- **Start small – pilot an idea and expand once model has proved appropriate. Invest in committed and enthusiastic staff.**
- **Make sure there is strong leadership.**
  Ensure partnerships operate at all levels in each organisation.
- **Establish good and clear links between all the partners.**
  Plan and evaluate all activities regularly.
- **Actively involve all partners and celebrate success at every opportunity.**
  Never forget that the young people are the number one priority.

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Joined-up learning

THIS SECTION summarises the key learning points from the other chapters and points the way forward for agencies, individuals and policy makers seeking to address the issues faced by young people. It combines aspects of our research and other studies.

Many young people at risk fo exclusion come from deprived backgrounds, broken homes and the 'care' system.
ACTION: Social change, economic development, improved housing, parenting skills, inter-agency work to identify problems early.

Exclusion takes many forms, but homelessness is one of the clearest manifestations.
ACTION: Better support for those leaving care, family support. Early identification of those at risk. More facilities for the homeless and more routes out of homelessness.

Homeless young people are most concerned about short-term 'survival' issues rather than learning.
ACTION: Remedy the main problems, (food, shelter, health, attitudes/motivation) before attempting learning activity.

Not all homeless young people are unwilling to learn.
ACTION: Accept each person as an individual.

Most disenchanted young people have negative memories of school.
ACTION: Schools must engage all young people and identify as early as possible those most at risk of failure – for whatever reason. Better school/home links must be developed. Consciously promote learning as relevant and not like school.

Once a young person is disenchanted it is much harder to re-engage them.
ACTION: Start early, in Primary or at pre-school level. Provide better support throughout school. Give effective pre-vocational support to build basic and key skills and help with personal problems.

Neither young people nor many agencies readily distinguish between education, training and learning.
ACTION: Clearly differentiate the terms at all levels and continue to enhance the image of learning as desirable. Stress the holistic and enjoyable/useful aspects of learning.

A lack of respect and encouragement leads to a lack of personal interest or involvement.
ACTION: Respect and encourage the learner. Listen to the young people and respond to their needs not the organisation's. Make learning interesting and fun and experiment with a range of activities and approaches, preferably taking a non-academic approach. Build rapport between tutors/trainers and the young people.

Many young people will continue to 'under-achieve' in terms of qualications and 'hard' outcomes.
ACTION: Allow success to be measured in different ways. Softer skills such as improved confidence, anger management, better communication, respect for others' views and team-working are as important, if not more so, than qualifications and measurable skills. Patience and time are the key.

Young people in different parts of the country may have different needs.
ACTION: Tailor schemes to local and individual needs. Analyse particular problems such as transport or access to opportunities.

There is still an atmosphere of competition in and a reluctance to share resources in some partnerships.
ACTION: All partners must be involved and informed – good communication is essential. Information should be shared, not hoarded.

Most agencies and partnerships, particularly in the voluntary sector, suffer funding constraints and tight funding criteria.
ACTION: Increased and more flexible funding is needed in the long term.

It will take a long time to solve the problems of the hard core who will continue to find their failures reinforced by the system.
ACTION: Time and resources must be available. Agencies will need to work ever more closely together to provide joined-up learning.

Selected further reading

Attitudes to Learning '98: MORI state of the nation survey. Campaign for Learning, 1998.
Bridging the Gap: new opportunities for 16–18 year olds not in education, employment or training. Social Exclusion Unit, 1999.
Destination Unknown: engaging with the problems of marginalised youths. Bentley/Gurumurthy, Demos, 1999.
Evaluation of initiatives to attract young people in training. DfEE, 1997.
Learning to Succeed: a new framework for post- 16 learning. DfEE, 1999.
Moving on Up: young people moving into employment and training through Foyers. Smith/ Granger, Foyer Federation, 1999.
New Start Journal. DfEE, bi-monthly.
Only Connect: successful practice in educational work with disaffected young adults. Merton/Parrott, NIACE/NYA, 1999.
Skills for life: a good practice guide to training homeless people for resettlement and employment. Crisis, 1988.
The Real Deal. Demos, 1999.
Understanding Barriers to Learning. Maxted, Campaign for Learning, 1999.
Wasted Youth: raising achievement and tackling social exclusion. Pearce/Hillman, IPPR, 1998.

Useful addresses

BASIC SKILLS AGENCY
Commonwealth House
1–19 New Oxford Street
London
WC1A 1NU
Tel: 0171 405 4017
Fax: 0171 404 5038
e-mail: enquires@basic-skills.co.uk
website: www.basic-skills.co.uk

BIG ISSUE
57 Clerkenwell Road
London
EC1
Tel: 0171 526 3200
Fax: 0171 526 3451

CAMPAIGN FOR LEARNING
19 Buckingham Street
London
WC2N 6EF
Tel: 0171 930 1111
Fax: 0171 930 1552
e-mail:campaign@cflearning.org.uk
website:www.campaign-for-learning.org.uk

CRISIS
1st Floor, Challenger House
42 Adler Street
London
E1 1EE
Tel: 0171 655 8330
Fax: 0171 247 1525

EUROPEAN SOCIAL FUND
ESF Unit, Level One
Caxton House
London
SW1H 9NF
e-mail: policy.esf.dfee.ch@gines.gov.uk

FAIRBRIDGE
207 Waterloo Road
London
SE1 8XD
Tel: 0171 928 1704
Fax: 0171 928 6016

FOYER FEDERATION
Humatt House
146 Clerkenwell Road
London
EC1R 5DG
Tel: 0171 833 8616
Fax: 0171 833 8717
e-mail: federation@foyer.net

FURTHER EDUCATION FUNDING COUNCIL FOR ENGLAND
Cheylsmore House
Quintay Road
Coventry
CV1 2WT
Tel: 01203 863000
website: www.fefc.ac.uk

HOUSING SERVICES AGENCY
140 Camden Street
London
NW1 9PF
Tel: 0171 482 1260

LEARNING DIRECT
(a free helpline offering impartial advice on education and training)
Tel: 0800 100 900

NATIONAL HOMELESS ALLIANCE
5–15 Cromer Street
London
WC1H 8LS
Tel: 0171 833 2071

NATIONAL YOUTH AGENCY
17 – 23 Albion Street
Leicester
LE1 6GD
Tel: 0116 285 6789
Fax: 0116 247 1043

NEW START
Department for Education and Employment
Moorfoot
Sheffield
S1 4PQ
Tel: 0114 259 3688
Fax: 0114 259 3719

NIACE
21 De Montfort Street
Leicster
LE1 7GE
Tel: 0116 204 4200
Fax: 0116 285 5414
e-mail: enquiry@niace.org.uk
website: www.niace.org.uk

PRINCE'S TRUST
8 Jockey's Fields
London
WC1R 4BW
Tel: 0171 543 1234
Fax: 0171 543 1200

SHELTER
88 Old Street
London
EC1V 9HU
Tel: 0171 505 2000

SOCIAL EXCLUSION UNIT
70 White Hall
London
SW14 2AS
Tel: 0171 270 1234

TEC NATIONAL COUNCIL
Westminster Tower
3 Albert Embankment
London
SE1 75X
Tel: 0171 735 0010
e-mail: info@tec.co.uk
website: www.tec.co.uk

UFI LTD
The Innovation Centre
217 Portobello Street
Sheffield
S1 4DP
Tel: 0114 224 2999 Fax: 0114 270 0034
e-mail: enquiries@ufi.cwc.com
website: www.ufiltd.co.uk

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION (WEA)
Temple House
17 Victoria Park Square
London
E2 9PB
Tel: 0181 983 1515

As we enter the next Millennium, it is clear that for several hundred thousand young people in some age groups, learning is not seen as being of the slightest importance. Recently, work by the Social Excusion Unit and new Government policy initiatives have created opportunities for the learning needs of disenchanted young people to be greatly increased.

This invaluable guide provides advice for those seeking to help young people back into learning. It summarises the current range of initiatives, draws on specially commissioned research into young people's attitudes to learning and includes case studies selected from a survey of organisations, especially Foyers, dealing with young people who are experiencing homelessness. It offers advice on how to promote and deliver learning opportunities for those young people in greatest need. It is aimed at all those involved in developing policy or working with disenchanted young people.

The guide is a collaboration between the Foyer Federation and the Campaign for Learning.

THE FOYER FEDERATION
opening doors for young people

This publication has been made possible by financial suppport from:

D/EE
Department for Education and Employment

Lincoln Financial Group

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The Campaign for Learning's vision is of an inclusive society in which learning is valued, understood, wanted and widely available. A society in which every individual and every organisation is actively involved in learning. To achieve this the Campaign works to create an appetite for learning that can be successfully satisfied throughout the UK.

ISBN 1-903107-01-6